

MINUTES
PAGE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
INFORMATIONAL MEETING
AUGUST 4, 2010

All Members Present: Johnny Woodward, Chairman, At-Large
 Larry A. Sours, District 2
 J. D. Cave, District 3
 Darrell Short, District 4
 Jeff Vaughan, District 5

Members Absent: Robert Griffith, District 1

Staff Present: Regina Miller, Executive Secretary

Others Present: Lieutenant Governor Bill Bolling
 Delegate C. Todd Gilbert
 Senator Mark Obenshain
 Brianna Campbell, Chamber of Commerce
 Leslie Clem, Page County Farmers Association
 Steve Galyean, Virginia Tourism Corporation
 Johnnie Housden, Page County Farm Bureau
 Matt Lohr, Commissioner, Virginia Department of Agriculture
 and Consumer Services
 Mayor Clinton Lucas, Town of Shenandoah
 Randy Marcus, Chief of Staff to Lieutenant Governor
 Florhline Painter, Page Workforce Job Center
 Terry Pettit, Stanley Town Manager
 Dr. Morgan Phenix, School Board Chairman & Lord Fairfax
 Community College
 Brian Plum, The Page Valley Bank
 Mayor Barry Presgraves, Town of Luray
 Karen Riddle, Past President, Chamber of Commerce
 Dr. Randy Thomas, Page County Schools Superintendent
 Sheriff John Thomas
 Liz Povar, Virginia Economic Development Partnership
 75 Citizens

Meeting Convened:

The informational meeting of the Page County Board of Supervisors convened at 2:19 p.m. on August 4, 2010 at the Luray VFW Building. A quorum of the Board was present. The meeting with Lieutenant Governor Bill Bolling was co-hosted by Senator Mark Obenshain and Delegate Todd Gilbert to create a local dialogue about economic development goals and strategies.

Delegate Gilbert opened with comments stating that he and Senator Obenshain talked and agreed that they need to try to find a way to make sure that Page County is on the

radar of the Governor's Administration when it comes to job creation. They agreed that the best way to accomplish this was to invite Lieutenant Governor, who has been tapped as Virginia's Chief Jobs Creation Officer, by Governor McDonnell. Page County does not have unique issues individually, but the collection of issues here put us in a position. It is not the job of the government to create jobs, but the Administration can do things to facilitate putting a company's needs together with the needs of a particular area.

Senator Obenshain thanked everyone for their participation in the meeting. He said he has spent a lot of time in Page County, in particular the past eight years, and there are several things that impress him about this County, such as the school system and work ethic among the people. There are a lot of people who are raising their children in this County, who want them to be able to set roots, earn a decent living, support their families, and continue to live in Page County, but this has been increasingly difficult to accomplish. Small businesses represent a significant source of where they will be looking to stimulate a recovery. He said he is interested in bringing big business to Page County, but as they look for those opportunities they cannot overlook the existing businesses in the County. They need to make sure they are not putting farms out of business by succumbing to regulations that make it impossible for people to make an honest living in farming. Tourism is a big part of the recovery in this County. Finally, he said we need to get the collective resources together to try and promote economic growth.

Lieutenant Governor Bolling thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The purpose of the meeting, he said, is for him to listen. It is the view of the Administration that the most important issue facing our state today is to get the economy moving again and creating jobs. His job, in working with the team, is to oversee the state's economic development and job creation efforts. The Board of Supervisors need to decide what the County's economic development vision is, as well as what type of business and industry they want. If the County does not have a vision, they are willing to work with the County to see what fits best, but it is ultimately up to the Board to develop that vision and strategy.

Chairman Woodward thanked everyone for taking the time to meet with the Board. Agriculture is Page County's biggest industry, he said, and is ranked the 4th largest agriculture-producing County in Virginia. The County also has a large tourism base. The County's natural assets are Shenandoah National Park, Shenandoah River and the Luray Caverns, which all bring many tourists into the County. He expressed that the cornerstone of Page County's future economic development efforts lies within our agriculture and tourism industries, but the County can be an option for the right industry. We must retain the existing businesses and encourage small businesses. Even though manufacturing is slowly fading, it is possible that with broadband capabilities, our internet savvy citizens could capitalize on this service and expand their internet business or be able to telecommute to work keeping our citizens in the community. Our economic past, present, and future is agriculture, tourism, and small businesses.

Lieutenant Governor Bolling responded that agriculture, tourism and small business is an important part of the County's economy, but he asked what is the County's economic development strategy? Chairman Woodward stated that the Board has not established a plan. Lieutenant Governor Bolling stated that a lot of other rural Counties also do not have a plan, but the state can assist the County in developing one.

Supervisor Vaughan remarked that the County has a strong work ethic as far as manufacturing jobs. These types of jobs, he said, have left because of global competition; however, there is a skill set in this County that caters to these types of jobs. The County is classified as a HUB Zone, and he said, hopefully the government can give the County an extension of communication tools to allow us to be in connection with the right people and assist us in those programs. There are a lot of people who would like to have a residence in the County that could, both, work and reside here. We have a surplus of labor that we need to capitalize on and this is the signal the County wants to send to the Governor.

Supervisor Sours commented that Page County is looking for environmentally clean industries. The County is also trying to get broadband through the award of a grant. The County needs someone to take a chance on us because we can supply the labor.

Lieutenant Governor Bolling asked if the County is part of a regional partnership? Board members noted that the County was a member of the Shenandoah Valley Partnership, but is not participating this year due to financial constraints. Lieutenant Governor Bolling understood the fiscal constraints but said that the ability to market a small rural locality as a self-sustaining entity is very limited. The ability to market the locality as part of a regional partnership is much more effective.

Supervisor Cave mentioned that it is good to have the assistance of government but the Board often hears that government gets in the way. In particular, there are sometimes issues in this County with VDOT. He has heard stories from businesses who want to expand and were required to make thousands of dollars worth of improvements to expand an entrance unnecessarily because of a VDOT regulation. What can be done in a rural area like this in these situations?

Lieutenant Governor Bolling stated that the state is trying to encourage their employees to apply VDOT regulations with common sense. If there is a specific project where there is a problem then the Administration would like to know what it is.

Florhline Painter, Workforce Job Center, spoke regarding the current unemployment situation in Page County. There is a great work ethic among the citizens in the County. If people do not have skills, the Job Center will train them through the local colleges, she said.

Liz Povar, Virginia Economic Development Partnership, stated that the Partnership is aware of Page County and the County is on their radar. Economic Development is all about creating wealth for the government, citizens, and for companies employing the

people. A company will not choose a location because you have a beautiful community. They want to know if they can make money here. The focus in Virginia is energy, advanced manufacturing, and information technology. For Page County and the Shenandoah Valley region, we are a good fit for all of those sectors, depending on the business. The Board and community should also have a shared vision. In addition, the Board must have an action plan, which needs to be transparent to the citizens. She stressed that without being a member of some regional organization through workforce, economic development, and tourism, then the County will be less successful. Lastly, in Ms. Povar's presentation, she cited some best practice examples used in Winchester/Frederick County, Wythe County, Carroll County, and Franklin/Southampton County. She emphasized that the most important thing the County can do is develop a vision, an action plan, and define where the resources will be spent to make the action plan work.

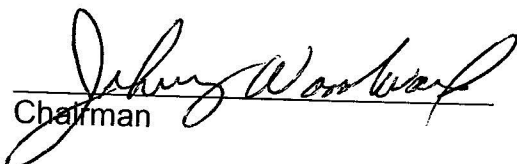
Steve Galyean, Virginia Tourism Corporation, explained that tourism is an important aspect of the economy in Page County. Tourism supports over 750 jobs in the County, and in 2008, generated over \$5 million in state and local tax revenue. The Luray-Page County Chamber of Commerce does a great job because they take advantage of the resources that are available, both locally and with the Corporation. The Chamber is successful in regional partnerships and this is also important from a tourism standpoint. The Corporation, he said, does have a lot of resources that are available to promote the area.

Matt Lohr, Commissioner, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, said that as Commissioner his job is to look for ways to keep agriculture profitable around the state, especially in the Shenandoah Valley. The Administration is very committed to agriculture and it is one of their major priorities. He hopes the County can capitalize on the tourism roots and combine them to look for ways that agriculture can tap into some of these special parts. Part of the problem across the state is that some local governments do not know how to handle agri-tourism because it does not fit conditional zoning. He said he hopes the Board will be sympathetic to the farmers with as they bring proposals to do some unconventional things on their farm that can be profitable for them and the economy.

In closing, Lieutenant Governor Bolling stated that the County has a lot to offer, but the Board needs to come up with some specific plans and strategies and determine how the state can partner with the County through their various agencies to help accomplish the plan and achieve the goals.

Conclusion:

The meeting concluded at 4:13 p.m.


Chairman